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ABSTRACT

Assuming that one way to meet the needs and to improve the delivery of services and amenities to isolated rural citizens is through increased interagency collaboration, an obective of this research was to explore stimuli and deterrents to such cooperative efforts. Thirty organizations (23 public groups, 4 private non-profit, and 3 private) serving all of Clinton County, New York, providing a service or amenity for local citizens, and interested in improved rural transportation systems were chosen for the representative sample. An interview schedule to assemble background information about the agencies and a mailed questionnaire to collect information about interagency interaction were used. The analysis of interorganizational relationships among agencies indicated that high interaction is more likely among organizations exhibiting formalization in structure and procedures, low autonomy in decision making, varied program goals and services, young age (established within the last 10 years), and a high measure of prestige. Size of budget, number of paid personnel, expressed feelings of threat and competition with other agencies, and general overall attitudes about interorganizational cooperation did not relate in a significant manner to agency interaction. (NEC)

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"INTERAGENCY COOPERATION - AN INVESTIGATION OF HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES COLLABORATION IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND AMENITIES TO RURAL CITIZENS IN CLINTON COUNTY NEW YORK"

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Roberta Merrens and Laura Kelly were responsible for the data collection in Clinton County, New York.

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Judy G. Tedford typed questionnaires and reports as well as helped in numerous ways.

Jean LeClair typed the final report.

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INTRODUCTION

Improvement of the quality of life in isolated rural areas of America appears likely to be related to the delivery of services and amenities in these regions; however, increased Federal, State and local allocations as well as private dollars for the wide range of necessary and desirable services and amenities are not keeping up with the rapidly spiraling costs of such human services either for particular needs (usually professional) or for the delivery mechanisms able to provide them (mobile units, satellite centers, added staff). The question, then, seems to be one of how to improve existing service delivery mechanisms in order to reach more consumers through established agencies, organizations, and programs. "Doing better with less" is the phrase repeated in the Clinton County New York United Way Office, "but how?" agency and program directors respond. The result appears to be a need for additional emphasis to be placed on interagency cooperation in service delivery. "Strengthen by consolidation" is one proposed solution whereby agencies can have more impact by cooperating on common goals or methods.

Efforts toward interagency cooperative ventures in the delivery of services and amenities have been confounded by the creation of numerous specialized competencies in American society and the placing of these competencies in particular organizations and agencies serving American communities. The development of specialized competencies has led to three forms of isolation and estrangement:

-separation and isolation of agencies from each other,

-separation and isolation of agencies from the community, and

-estrangement of agencies from both the people they serve and those they might potentially serve.[1]

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[1] Edward O. Moe, "Agency Collaboration in Planning and Service, Rural Sociology 632," paper presented at the National Conference on Social Welfare Centennial Forum, Atlantic City, NJ, May 1973.

What has emerged within each community, then, is a complex array of individualized organizations, agencies, and programs with a built-in dilemma of major proportions. On the one hand, there is a series of public and private services with vertical ties between the local and national level. On the other hand, at the community level, there is often difficulty in relating these services laterally to each other in such a way that an effective attack can be made on significant problems. Despite the basic separation and estrangement between agencies and the people, and despite the existence of complex problems in cooperation and coordination, the building of the array of specialized organizations and agencies is still a major achievement.

Given, thus, the wide array of programs available to the public, the fragmented nature of their delivery, and the burgeoning costs of these services and amenities, attempts to improve delivery must focus on comprehensive planning, and on techniques for increased interagency cooperation. The primary assumption of this research is that agencies and organizations seen as highly interactive among themselves will be perceived as being more willing to cooperate on interagency activities designed to meet needs of isolated citizens in rural communities.

THE PROBLEM

During 1974, New York State began concentrating some of the funds from the Rural Development Act of 1972, Title V allocations in Clinton County where delivery of services to isolated rural citizens had been identified by a local advisory group as a serious problem. A great deal of data and information was gathered and analyzed by the Service Accessibility Project to determine services and amenities available,[2,3] and citizens' perceptions of needs, services, and amenities not presently being met.[4] Once obtainable services had been indexed and remaining persistent needs identified in rural areas outside the central city region of the county, the logical third step in the project appeared to be new and/or improved delivery of the services recognized as currently being needed.

Assuming that one way to meet the needs and to improve the delivery of services and amenities to isolated rural citizens is through increased inter-agency collaboration, an objective of this research has been to explore stimuli and deterrents to such cooperative efforts, and:

-to identify in one rural county interagency interactions which might lead to increased cooperative ventures;

-to recognize agencies and organizations which have a higher degree of interaction than others;

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[2]Peter H. Gore, Jerome Sandau, and Eileen Stommes. "The Crossroads Survey, A Methodology for Assessing Differentiation by Locality of Services in Clinton County." Plattsburgh, NY: Institute for Man and Environment, Miner Center, Chazy, NY, April 1975.

[3]Peter H. Gore, Kusuma Embar and Eileen Stommes. "The Key Informant Survey, Access to Services in Clinton County." Plattsburgh, NY: Institute for Man and Environment, Miner Center, Chazy, NY, January 1977.

[4]Peter H. Gore, "General Service Accessibility Project Survey," Ithaca, NY: Department of Rural Sociology, Cornell University, Summer 1975.

-to explore the internal and administrative characteristics of the highly interactive groups; and

-to speculate about ways to ennance general collaborative interactions among all groups purporting to provide services and amenities in rural communities.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Clinton County, New York, is a relatively large rural upstate region (1,131 square miles), with a population of 83,000 people. The county seat of Plattsburgh, located on the shores of Lake Champlain is the only population center of more than 10,000 people; its 1970 population was 18,715. The remainder of the county's people live in small villages generally under 2,500, rural hamlets, and isolated residences. The central city (Plattsburgh), however, is not centrally located and some county residents must drive nearly 40 miles to reach it (see Figure 1.). The Council of Community Services of Plattsburgh and Clinton County--a United Fund Agency--publishes a directory of services and amenities in the county. The directory lists over one hundred and twenty public, private, and private non-profit groups purporting to serve various needs of local citizens; a majority of these groups are physically located in Plattsburgh.

Previous research studies of this nature have usually focused on similar kinds of organizations for investigation, e.g., development organizations[5] or organizations in the manpower training systems.[6]

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[5]David L. Rogers and Joseph J. Molnar, "Interorganizational Relations Among Development Organizations: Empirical Assessment and Implications for Interorganizational Coordination." Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, 1977.

[6]Howard Aldrich. "An Organization--Environment Perspective on Cooperation and Conflict Between Organizations in the Manpower Training System." Ithaca, NY: New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Reprint Series 333, 1972.

CLINTON COUNTY

FIGURE ONE

MAP OF CLINTON COUNTY

Likewise, earlier work has often involved multi-county or state-wide studies of interorganizational relations. This research project, however, has focused on a problem area--rural transportation--as a way of identifying and choosing agencies and organizations for the sample.[7] Also in contrast to previous studies, all the groups in this study are located in or are serving the people of one county - Clinton.

From the Clinton County Council of Community Services Directory, 30 organizations--23 public groups, 4 private non-profit, 3 private--were chosen for the representative sample. All agencies/organizations included met the following criteria:

- -they serve all of Clinton County (some represent a larger region,)
- -they provide a service or amenity for local citizens,
- -they should be interested in improved rural transportation systems either for getting services to rural people or for transporting clients/consumers to an agency.

As a result of this research group's discussions about the problem of rural transportation in order to determine a sample of organizations for the investigation, a Rural Development/Cooperative Extension Task Force emerged to plan public meetings and explore the realities of a county-wide rural transportation system. The task force sent over fifty letters to local groups inviting them to an informational session about rural transportation. Twenty-one people attended the first meeting representing fourteen (nearly half) of the same groups who had been chosen for this research sample. A follow-up transportation

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[7] Clinton County, NY, is a large region with widely dispersed rural residents while services, amenities, and employment possibilities are primarily concentrated in the central city located in the east central section of the county. It has been estimated that over $47,000 a day in consumer costs are spent for traveling to and from work alone in Clinton County (Gore, 1977).

meeting included the same agency representatives plus five more, also part of the research sample. Consequently, two-thirds of the agencies in the sample attended, on a volunteer basis, at least one of the public meetings about rural transportation. This attendance seemed to provide a validity check for which groups should, in fact, be interested in improved rural transportation in Clinton County, New York. Even though the researchers selected the thirty different groups for the sample based on a brief description of the agency's functions and concluded that rural transportation should be important to its service delivery, the investigators never assumed that all these agency personnel would necessarily agree that a satisfactory transportation system might be vital to their programs, products and services.

DATA COLLECTION

In order to investigate the research question of how agencies interrelate on a problem area, two data collection devices were constructed to tabulate necessary information for the study:

- -an interview schedule to assemble background information about the agencies, and
- -a mailed questionnaire to collect information about interagency interaction and collaboration.

A majority of the questions were based on the previous work of Aldrich,[8] Moe,[9] and Finley.[10] Remaining questions resulted from four years of agency involvement

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[8]Aldrich, op. cit.

[9]Moe, op. cit.

[10]James R. Finley, "A Study of Interorganizational Relationships," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, June 1970.

by the principle investigators and from the general literature concerning theories and observations about interagency cooperation. The instruments were pretested with similar agency personnel in Jefferson County (a rural upstate New York area). Revisions in clarity and procedures were made on the instruments as a result of interviews with nine respondents in Jefferson County.

The interview schedule covered the following topics:

-background information about respondents,

-goals of the organization,

-expected program outcomes,

-administrative structure,

-where clients originate,

-what happens to clients after they have been involved with the agency,

-staffing,

-budgets,

-programming,

-internal operations,

-external commitments of the organization and staff,

-linkage of the group to outside agencies,

-perception about decision making within the organization,

-opinions about competition with others for funds, clients, and programs, and,

-feelings about overall interagency cooperation in the county.

The mailed portion of the data collection contained twenty-two questions in hierarchical order and requested the respondent to make judgments about his/her agency's working relationship with each of the other 29 groups in the sample. This detailed agency interaction check list, judged to be too tedious to administer

in person, was mailed one week ahead of the personal interview and collected in completed form at the time of the appointment.

The agency interaction questionnaire contained the following questions:

-Are you familiar with or acquainted with any of the agencies/organizations on this list?

-Hypothetically speaking, which of these would you be most likely to work with if you were -
a) promoting a senior citizen housing project?
b) working on a rural transportation project?

-How well acquainted are you with programs/activities of the following groups?

-How well acquainted are you with the Director/staff of the following groups?

-Through what channels do you receive information about each of these organizations?
a) radio/television
b) newspaper
c) phone contacts
d) personal meetings/appointments
e) social contacts

-During the past 12 months has your organization engaged in a joint activity with the following groups in any of the following ways -
a) joint meetings
b) shared specific information on programs/activities
c) joint activities/projects
d) exchanged services with this group
e) transferred money/resources or sponsored this group
f) shared jointly staff and/or staff training with this group
g) engaged in joint budgetary considerations
h) jointly owned or rented facilities with
i) overlapping boards - are there any officers or board members of your group who are officers or board members of the following groups

-During the past year, has your organization sent referrals to any of the following groups?

-During the past year have you received referrals from any of the following groups?

-Assuming that the mid-point on this scale represents an average level of cooperation existing between agencies, on a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the overall level of cooperation between your organization and the following groups?

The research plan specified an interview with each agency director or the highest ranking administrator in the organization and an interview with one other staff member and/or board member for the group. Of the thirty groups included in the sample, only two provided no information. The administrator for the private, non-profit hospital said he had no time for such studies and neither did his staff. The Youth Bureau did not participate primarily because the chief administrator was out of town during the time the interviews were being conducted and none of his staff was willing to answer questions without first obtaining the director's permission.

Overall, complete interview data were received from 28 of the thirty agencies. There were 57 respondents in total with five of these not completing the mailed questionnaire. Since the information was collected in July and August 1977, it is not surprising that some data were missing due to agency personnel vacation schedules. In some cases, supplementary information was gleaned from agency annual reports contributed by the interviewees.

Description of Respondents and Agencies
- Interview Schedule -

Respondents

Of the 57 respondents in the sample, fifty three percent were males and forty-seven percent females. Well over a third were directors in their organizations (39%) with fifty percent more serving as professional staff. The remaining eleven percent represented board members for their respective groups.

Agency Typology

Of the thirty agencies in the sample, 17 can be classified public, ten private, non-profit and three private. Figure two lists the organization names.

Goals

When asked what their primary purpose or goal was, many respondents found it difficult to give a specific response. The most frequent answer (28%) included education, planning and referral. The second highest response (25%) included information, referral, advocacy and outreach. One fifth of the interviewees mentioned benefits of some kind to low income families. The respondents from the private sector (12%) seemed more sure of goals and usually limited their answers to product promotion and manufacturing. The respondents who saw themselves strictly involved with health related services formed nine percent of the sample, and a mere five percent said, "information dissemination and coordination." Figure three gives a graphic picture of how respondents classified their primary functions.

In a somewhat different way, the question of goals was asked again, "What specific outcomes does your organization expect from its efforts?" Only two percent responded with "agency cooperation." Figure four shows that the remaining answers include:

-referrals 4%

-intervention/advocacy 7%

-a product of some kind 9%

-combination of education, advocacy, independence, out of poverty 24%

-citizens' good use of available services 26%

-out of poverty, independence for clients 28%

Association of Retarded Children	Private, Non-profit
Catholic Charities	Private, Non-profit
Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital	Private, Non-profit
City of Plattsburgh Housing Authority	Public
Clinton Community College	Public
Clinton County Cooperative Extension	Public
Clinton County Youth Bureau	Public
Clinton, Essex, Franklin Library System	Public
Community Development Centers	Private, Non-profit
Council of Community Services	Private, Non-profit
County Health Department	Public
County Mental Health Services	Public
Department of Labor	Public
Department of Social Services	Public
Department of Transportation	Public
Downtown Merchants Association	Private
Farmers Home Administration	Public
Joint Council for Economic Opportunity	Private, Non-profit
Lake George-Lake Champlain Planning Board	Public
Mental Health Association	Private, Non-profit
Office for the Aging	Public
Planned Parenthood	Private, Non-profit
Plattsburgh Air Force Base	Public
Pyramid Mall Association	Private
Retired Senior Volunteer Program	Public
Salvation Army	Private, Non-profit
Senior Citizens Council	Private, Non-profit
Sheridan-Harris Corporation	Private
Social Security Administration	Public
State University of New York at Plattsburgh	Public

FIGURE TWO

ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES IN THE SAMPLE

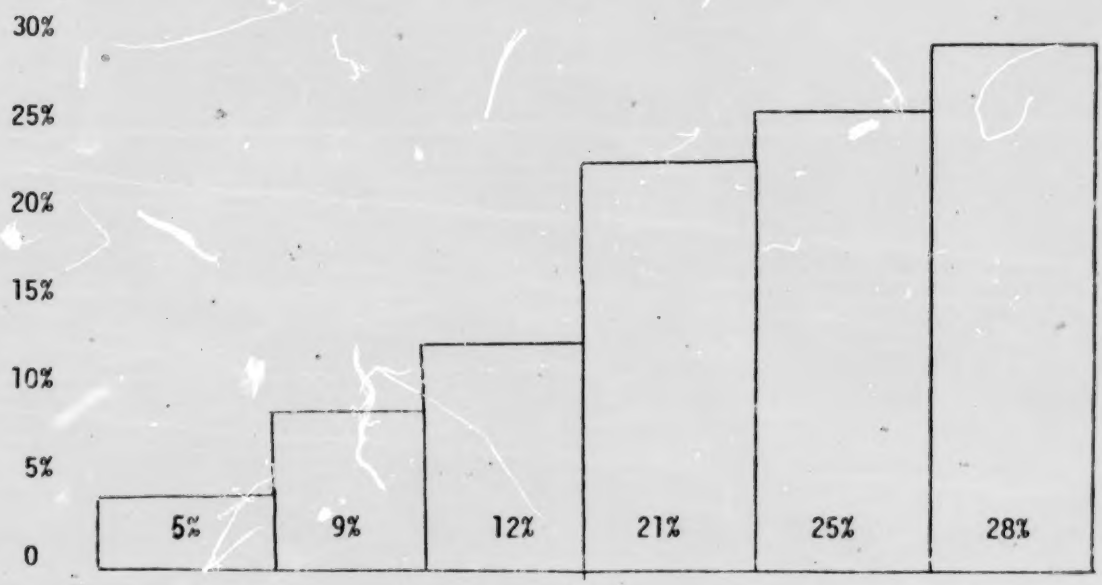

FIGURE THREE

PRIMARY PURPOSE OR GOAL OF ORGANIZATION/AGENCY

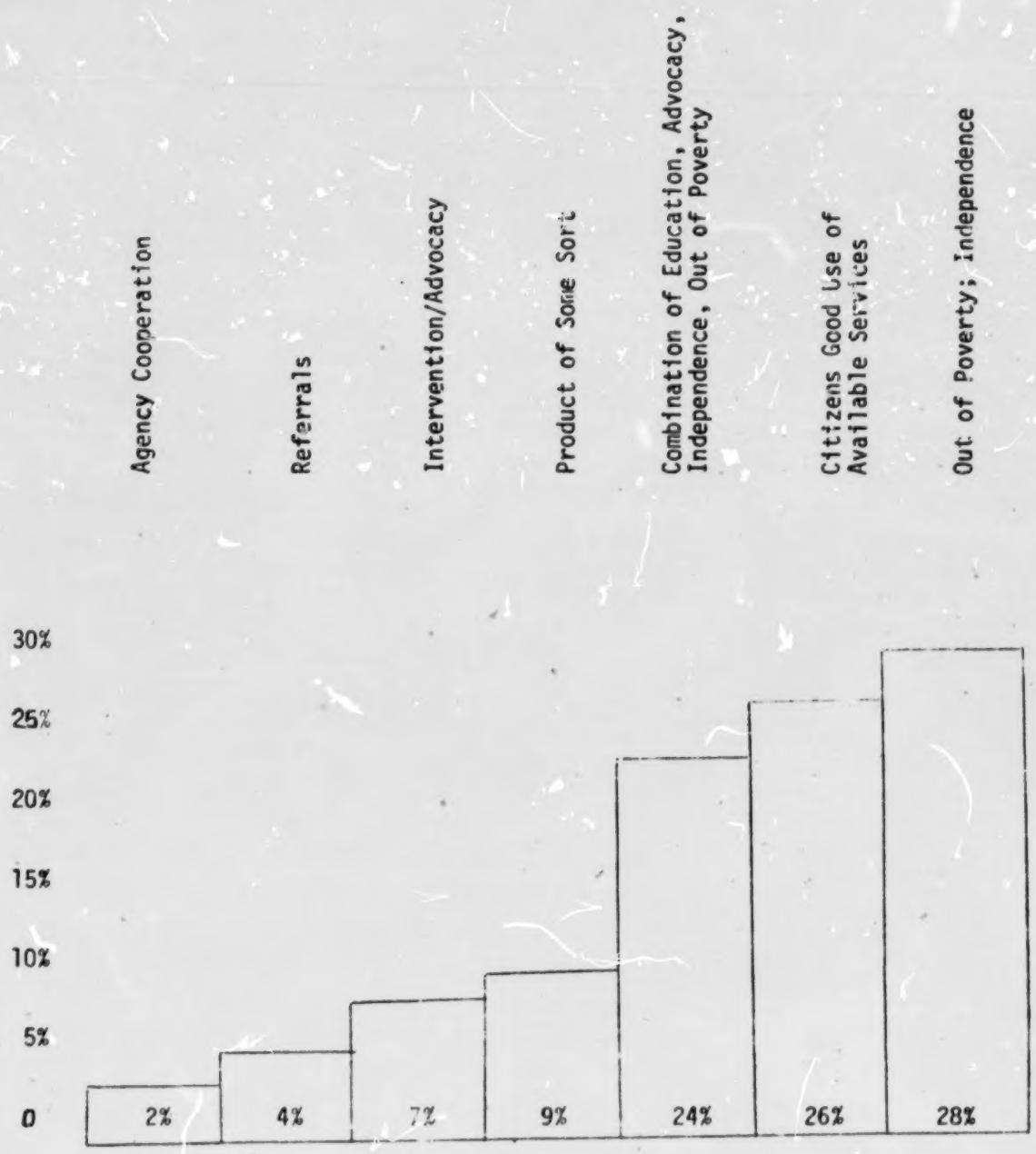

FIGURE FOUR

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES EXPECT FROM EFFORTS/PROGRAMS

Interagency collaboration in the delivery of goods and services rarely was seen as either an organization goal or outcome for these groups.

Age and Service Area

A majority of the agencies (75%) have been in existence in the Clinton County area for eleven years or longer. Only six groups were five years old or younger. A majority of the agencies (70%) serve only the geographical boundary of Clinton County and the City of Plattsburgh, and the remaining thirty percent provide services to the county plus a larger territory as well, e.g., multi-county districts.

Personnel

Staffing included full time employees, part-time employees, and volunteers with some having a combination of the three. Forty percent of the groups operated with five or fewer full time paid personnel and the remaining agencies reported anywhere from eleven to over one hundred paid employees. With a sizeable number of relatively small agencies operating, it did not seem surprising that twenty percent reported no available chart depicting organizational structure. Yet, only twelve people (21%) said their performance was never formally evaluated by a supervisor. Others described yearly, twice a year, or quarterly job performance evaluation procedures as being in effect in their respective agencies. Some sort of personnel performance accountability seems to be taking place in most of these organizations whether large or small. A large majority (72%) reported very little turnover in personnel in their organizations. This response is not unusual given that Clinton County is a high unemployment area with a large pool of new college graduates and faculty and Air Force spouses struggling for professional staff positions, particularly at the entry level in the human services.

Budget

Annual budgets for the organizations varied widely. Over fifty percent of the respondents in the sample reported budgets of over $100,000 a year while a quarter of the group operated with $25,000 or less and six of these managed on less than $10,000 annually. As might be expected, seventy percent answered that at least half (53% said all) their money came from public funds. Twenty-three percent of the interviewees noted receiving at least partial funding from the United Way. Private funds made up all or some of the operating expenses for the agencies represented by only 15 percent of the interviewees.

Clientele

Agency personnel for the most part found it difficult to describe in detail their clientele. Some groups were mandated to serve only low income families, and others only youth, retarded, or elderly. They were also not very specific about how clients found out about their services. For the most part they seem to think that other organizations referred clients to them or that clients referred themselves to most services, but were frequently not sure. Similarly, agency personnel were not certain what happens to clients after they have received particular services. Half the group (those usually providing direct services such as Department of Labor, Employment Service) speculated that their clients needed no follow up or additional services; that they reached an independent status. Over half (65%) of the groups said they provide actual services for at least fifty percent of their clients and only 18 percent responded that they regularly refer fifty percent or more of their clients to other agencies in the community for services. It appears that agency personnel seldom talk with each other about referrals or that referrals are not done in a systematic way.

Decision Making

Decisions about policy and budget were seen as highly centralized for the most part, with a few people at the top making them. Staff said they were included more often, however, in daily program decisions especially in such areas as hiring staff, adopting programs, and handling public relations. When asked who specifically is responsible for new programs and activities in the organizations, about half said the executive director in consultation with the board of directors. A fifth of the sample reported that new programs were determined by local, state, and federal mandates and that staff worked only to fulfill the given directives. Seventy percent of the respondents reported reciprocal work flow patterns in their agencies while only twenty percent said the work assignments were from the top down in pyramid style.

Interagency Collaboration

In terms of meetings outside the agency, two thirds of the respondents said they regularly attended three or more meetings a month with members of other organizations. Yet, nearly seventy percent also said that they spent less than a quarter of their time in coordination and planning with people from other organizations. Nearly all respondents reported that someone from their group specifically represents their agency to other organizations in the community. Almost half (47%) noted that their agency was required by statute to establish linkages (working connections) with certain other organizations. And 64 percent said their group was bound by program guidelines to establish linkages.

When asked if they operate any programs/activities jointly, 53 percent said yes in terms of sharing expenses for cooperative ventures, 62 percent

in terms of sharing responsibility for combined efforts, and 70 percent in terms of sharing staff time. Almost half of the interviewees (47%) said there were other organizations in the county providing services and programs similar to theirs, and that they had to compete with some of them for funds, clients and programs.

In summary, even though all agencies in the sample presumably have some interest in the problem of rural transportation in Clinton County, NY, they obviously are not a homogeneous group. The agencies vary widely in terms of goals, clientele, age, number of employees, size of budgets, and internal structure and decision making. This variety contributes both to the difficulty and reality of analyzing human service agency collaboration in a given area. Even so, three quarters of the respondents reported that overall there was moderate to high cooperation among the organizations in this area.

Agency Interaction

-Mailed Questionnaire-

The Agency Interaction Questionnaire involved all thirty of the groups in the sample making judgments about each other on 22 different questions. When asked who should be involved in working on a rural transportation project from this list of thirty, the agencies who were most frequently mentioned were, for the most part, the same ones who had attended an earlier public meeting about the possibilities for implementing a rural transportation network.

As predicted, positive responses for the acquaintance questions were highest for familiarity with each other; knowledge about programs and activities for individual agencies received the second highest set of answers,

with the third highest given to acquaintance with the director/staff of the respective groups. When asked how the respondents acquired information about each other, local newspapers received the highest frequency of yes answers; phone contacts were second; personal meetings and appointments third; radio/television fourth; and social contacts fifth. Based on earlier research by Perrucci and Pilisuk,[11] the authors have assumed that "social contacts" would provide more information about each other's activities than actually appeared to be the case in this study.

In terms of levels of joint activities, the sharing of information about programs and activities was most often done, with joint meetings occurring second most frequently, and actually being involved in joint activities and projects third. An even higher level of interaction question asked in what ways joint activities might have been entered into and the responses were the following with the greatest frequence of activity first:

-exchange services with this group

-shared jointly staff and/or staff training

-overlapping officers or board members

-transferred money or resources; sponsoring this group

-engaged in joint budgetary considerations

-jointly own or rent facilities

For the most part, the agencies said they sent more referrals to other groups in the sample than they received. The last question asked each person to rate the other 29 groups in the sample on an overall level of cooperation between themselves and the other agencies. The question said that assuming the mid-point represented an average level of cooperation,

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[11] Robert Perrucci and Marc Pilisuk, "Leaders and Ruling Elites: The Inter-organizational Bases of Community Power," American Sociological Review, vol. 35, December 1970, p. 1040-1057.

"Rate the overall level of cooperation between your organization and the other 29 in the sample on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 high." Responses ranged from a low of 1.6 to a high of 3.8 with the median score being 3.0. An effort was then made to see if strong positive peer perceptions about interagency cooperation would in fact help identify groups high on interaction.

Analysis

After the initial examination of the marginal frequencies for each statement on this questionnaire, a further degree of sophistication in analysis was obtained by the construction of a Guttman scale composed of six of the items. The Guttman scale was constructed by dichotomizing agency responses to the questions according to the percentage of positive responses. This Scale of Agency Interaction demonstrated the unidimensionality of this particular data set; Figure 5 displays the items. The threshold statement with 87 percent agreement states generally agency personnel are familiar with or acquainted with each other. The statement at the top of the Scale with the least amount of acceptance (17%) asked if agencies had exchanged services with each other. The Scale was acceptable in terms of scalability - .85 - and reproducibility - .97.

The items composing the Scale of Agency Interaction are consistent with Moe's[12] pattern of levels of collaboration. He classified awareness, acquaintance, and unplanned kinds of interaction as low levels of collaboration; planned participation, exchanges, and interactions as middle level; and joint planning, development and sharing of resources as high level collaboration. Items one and two on the Scale of Agency Interaction fall into Moe's low level of collaboration, while items three, four, five and six can be classified

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[12]Moe, op. cit.

middle level. Moe suggested that counting, measuring, and scaling specific activities, interaction, cooperation or collaboration provide a basis for determining levels of cooperation among organizations.

This Scale of Agency Interaction, in a beginning way, replicates the Interorganizational Relations Scale prepared earlier by Finley.[13] In 1969 Finley identified 17 activities with which the level of intensity of cooperation could be measured, and with which he could distinguish low, middle level, or high level cooperation. He found the items to be scalable, using Guttman scaling techniques. Even though the Finley scale contains more items, the complexity of the items in both scales displays increased interagency interaction at the top of the scale.

[13] Finley, op. cit.

Scale Step	Item	Cummulative Percentages of sample included
6	Have you exchanged services with this group?	17%
5	Have you engaged in joint activities/ projects with this group?	27%
4	Have you had joint meetings with this group?	43%
3	Have you had personal meetings/appoint-ments with this group?	53%
2	Have you learned about this group through the newspaper?	73%
1	Are you familiar with or acquainted with this group?	87%

Coefficient of Scalability - .85
Coefficient of Reproducibility - .97

FIGURE FIVE

GUTTMAN SCALE OF AGENCY INTERACTION

FINDINGS

Table One shows how the thirty groups in the sample ranked on the Scale of Agency Interaction.

Table 1

RANKS OF GROUPS ON THE AGENCY INTERACTION SCALE*

	High on Scale[14]	Medium on Scale	Low on Scale
Human Service Groups (14)	8	5	1
Health Related Groups (4)	1	2	1
Educational Groups (3)	3		
Federal/State Groups (6)	1	1	4
Private Groups (3)		1	2

*N = 30

[14] It is interesting to note that all groups appearing on the list of high interacting agencies for this Scale voluntarily attended the public meetings about a proposed county-wide rural transportation project.

As might be predicted from the names, agencies with coordinating functions, i.e., County Office for the Aging, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Community Development Centers, Catholic Charities, Council of Community Services, Senior Citizens Council, Cooperative Extension, ranked among those in the high group. Similar to the findings from the Rogers study,[15] innovative kinds of groups with broad service responsibilities were found to be more interactive. It seems too that agencies with less autonomy in funding and programming exhibit higher levels of interaction than the more autonomous groups--private agencies and those with product or manufacturing orientations.

In an effort to find out how the agencies ranking high on the Interaction Scale differed from the other groups, the gamma statistic was used to determine a measure of association between orders of ranks on the Agency Interaction Scale and orders of ranks on other selected variables.[16] The following variables were significantly related to those agencies with higher interaction scores on the Guttman Scale:

-agency purpose being education, referral, planning, information dissemination, advocacy, outreach as opposed to direct services, product promotion, manufacturing*

-agency age of ten years or younger; older groups were less interactive**

-agency required by statute to establish linkages with other groups**

-agency has chart depicting organizational structure**

-professionals attend 3 or more monthly meetings outside the agency with people from other organizations**

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[15]Rogers, op. cit.

[16]William Mendenhall, Lyman Ott, and Richard Larson, Statistics: A Tool for the Social Sciences. North Scituate, Mass.: Duxbury Press, 1974, p. 362.

-authority to make daily program decisions inside the agency is highly decentralized*

-agency personnel rating other agency personnel in sample high on cooperation (pper perceptions)**

Other variables which showed no significant association with high ranking on the Interaction Scale were:

-required only by program guidelines to establish linkages with other groups

-number of paid personnel

-expressed feeling of competing with other groups for funds, clients, or programs

-percent of time spent in coordination and planning with people from other organizations

-work flow chart exhibits reciprocal manner among members in agency not one where work flows from top down in pyramid style

-number of regular monthly meetings within the agency

-size of budget

-provide funds for sponsor/other group(s)

-opinion about overall interorganizational cooperation in this area

It has been interesting to observe that eighteen months after the first discussions about a rural transportation system began as a basis for this research, the voluntary task force is continuing to work diligently on solutions for such a transportation network. Proposals have been submitted to the New York State Department of Transportation and funding appears forthcoming. As a measure of validation for this study, six of the thirteen groups who scored high on the Guttman Scale of Agency Interaction and who attended the early task force meetings are the same

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* significant at .05
** significant at .01

organizations who have followed through with work on the development of the funding proposals in order to make the transportation system a reality in Clinton County New York.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of interorganizational relationships among agencies which should be interested in the problem of rural transportation in Clinton County, NY, indicated that high interaction is more likely among organizations exhibiting the following characteristics:

- -Organizational charts are available; the agency is required by statute to establish linkages with other groups; and standardized internal procedures seem to enhance collaboration with others (measure of formalization).
- -There appears to be multiple authority within the agency structure; highly decentralized internal program decision making within the group (measure of low autonomy in terms of authority).
- -A variety of services and programs are offered by the agency; high degree of program innovation as opposed to a smaller number of programs and services or single services (measure of specific and varied program goals).
- -Agencies are relatively young, established within last ten years (measure of age).
- -Agency personnel's perceptions about other groups' overall interagency cooperation was recorded. Groups who received high peer evaluations on interagency cooperation also received high scores on the actual Agency Interaction Scale (measure of prestige).

Size of budget, number of paid personnel, expressed feelings of threat and competition with other agencies, and general overall attitudes about inter-organizational cooperation in the area did not relate in a significant manner to agency interaction.

Like this study, Rogers' work also found that agency formalization, low autonomy in decision making, prestige, and clearly defined goals described highly interactive groups. Finley's research found budget to be an important variable too, but age not significant. Size of budget and number of paid personnel in this research did not relate in a significant way to agency

TABLE TWO

COMPARISON OF FINDINGS ON INTERAGENCY INTERACTION IN THREE ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES

Characteristics of Interactive Agencies

	Finley	Rogers	Gore/Nelson
variety of services	0	+	+
age (young)	-	-	+
has organizational chart	0	+	+
decentralized internal decision-making	0	+	+
size of budget	+	*	-
clearly defined goals	+	+	+
number of paid personnel	0	*	-
prestige (reputation)	+	+	+

0 = not reported

- = not found to be significant

+ = found to be significant

* = curvilinear

IMPLICATIONS

Interaction among agencies in a community are not predetermined, but emerge out of their relationships with each other. Various problems in the community can be addressed by organizations relating to each other in more deliberate ways to attain specific objectives. All too often when agencies

do finally jointly tackle a big and important problem because they know they cannot do it alone, they find themselves unprepared or poorly prepared to invest the effort and the time that the planning and action require.

Results of this interagency collaboration study help to:

-Determine topics for community level workshops to investigate interagency cooperative approaches for solving local problems;

-Provide clues helpful in identifying groups most likely to participate in interagency projects; and

-Suggest agency internal structures which might encourage more interaction with other groups.

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